Vol. IX. No. 8 NOVEMBER, 1915

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The Playground

Are Neighborhood Centers Worth While?

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
A NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER RUNNING FULL BLAST AT NIGHT

Twenty-five Cents a Copy Two Dollars a Year

The Playground

Published Monthly by the

PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

1 Madison Avenue, New York City

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"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"

When the hours of leisure have come in the evening and the spirit of youth calls—from all parts of the neighborhood, young and old, singly or in families, men and women, may come together in their own schoolhouse center to sing together and lose all loneliness in the joy of the common life of the neighborhood.

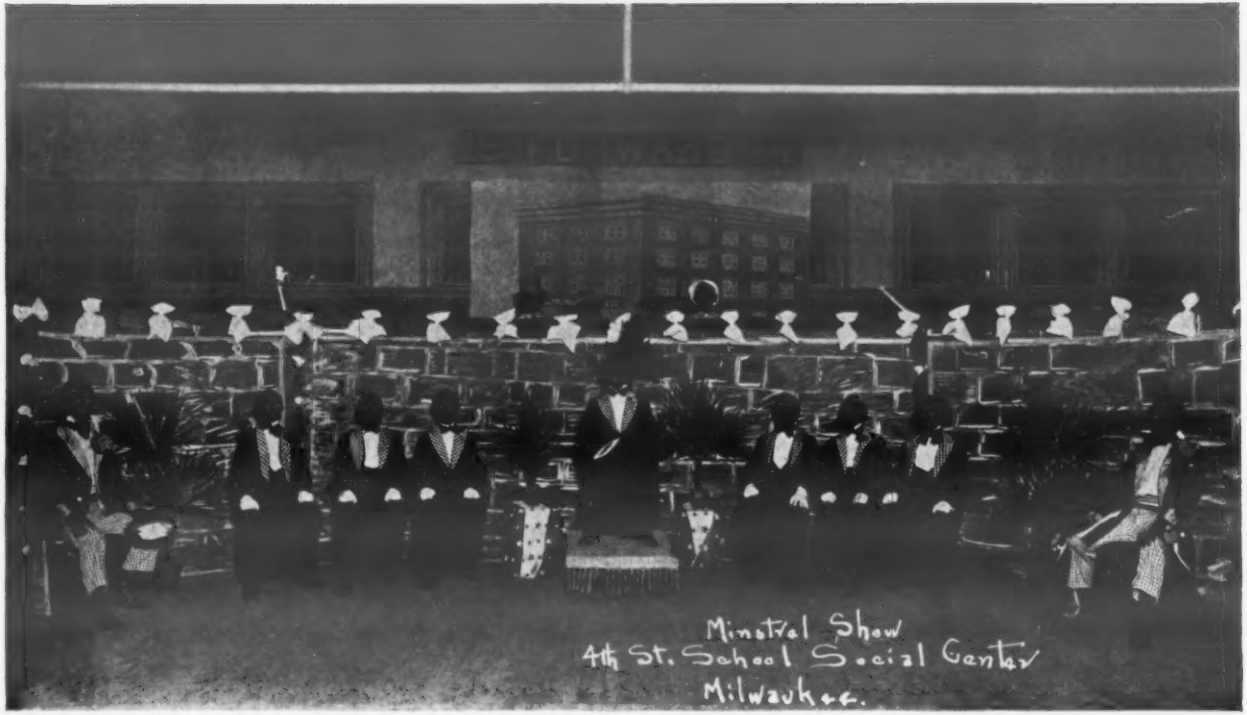
Whether a young man be in the lumber camp, at college or in the factory, music has great power over him. The neighborhood schoolhouse is a better clubhouse than the street corner.

Each according to his musical talent may find opportunity in the neighborhood center. Some of the musical organizations are composed of men only, some of women only, some of both men and women; sometimes father, mother, and son are all in the same group.

Men and women born under other flags learn American customs and traditions in the neighborhood center and make their own distinct contribution to the neighborhood life and art.

A young man has the same pride in belonging to the regular neighborhood orchestra that a college boy has in making the mandolin club. As he plays at various neighborhood gatherings, he feels that the world would not go on quite so well without him—that he is a part.

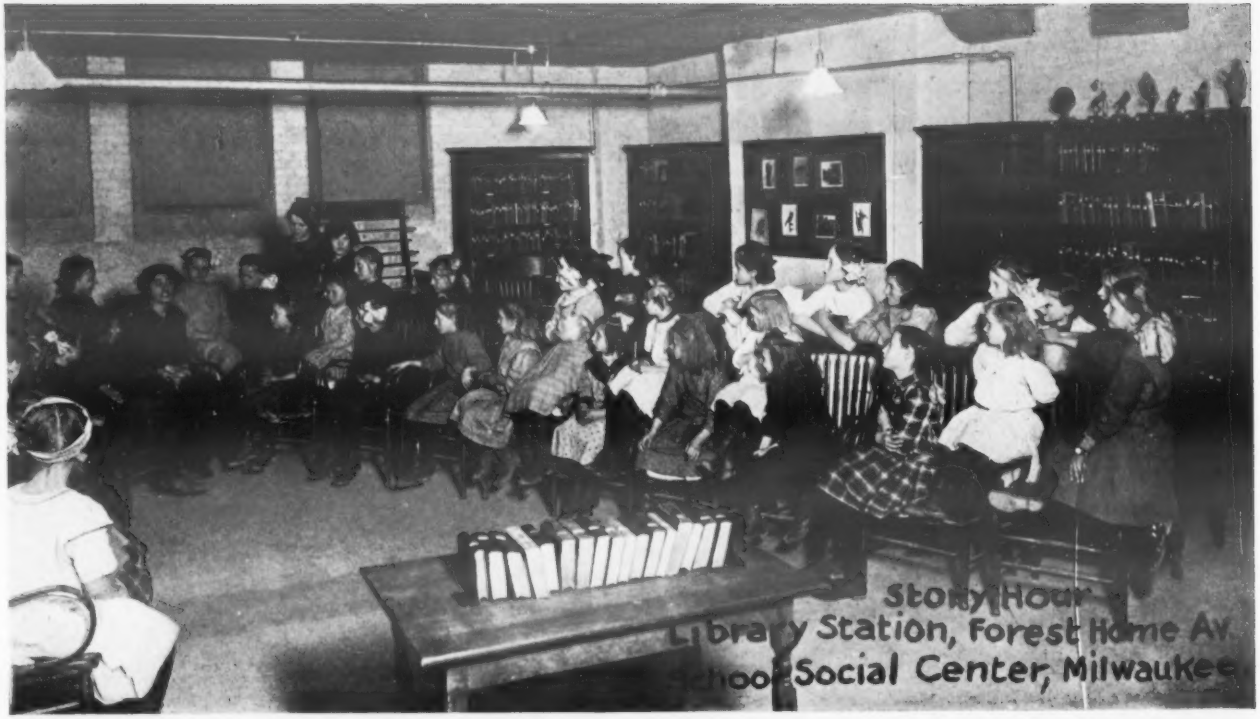
Instead of being one of thousands looking on at a regular play in the theatre, or one of tens of thousands watching moving pictures, the young people themselves act, stage plays, and come to understand life as no spectator can.



In years gone by many a barn has been the stage for minstrel shows. With the growth of the city the schoolhouse affords a natural center for the boys and the young men of the neighborhood. Many boys are without any place for such efforts when the schoolhouse is closed to them.

DEBATING—PLAY OF THE MIND—LEARNING TO THINK ON ONE'S FEET

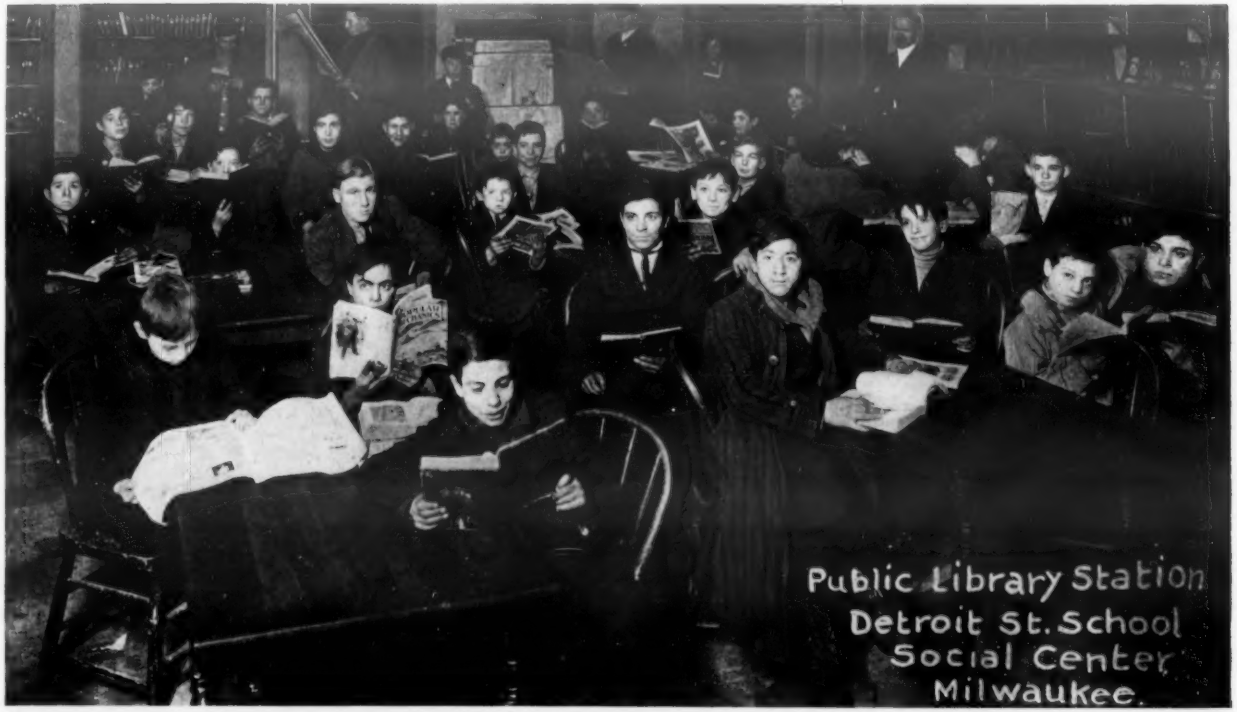
In considering all these pictures one should bear in mind that they are all flashlight, indoor photographs and that it is much harder to present indoor activities than outdoor.



The story-teller had a large place in ancient civilization. The children who are to-day learning the folk-lore of the past will make the evening hours in their future homes more attractive for the children that gather round.

Boys who do not care to read will listen, fascinated, to well-told stories.

Libraries are able to increase the use of their books when branches are established where the children and young people go. The library is an important part of a neighborhood center. The boy in a club that is studying dogs wants to read more about dogs; the girl in the bird club wants to take out a book on birds.

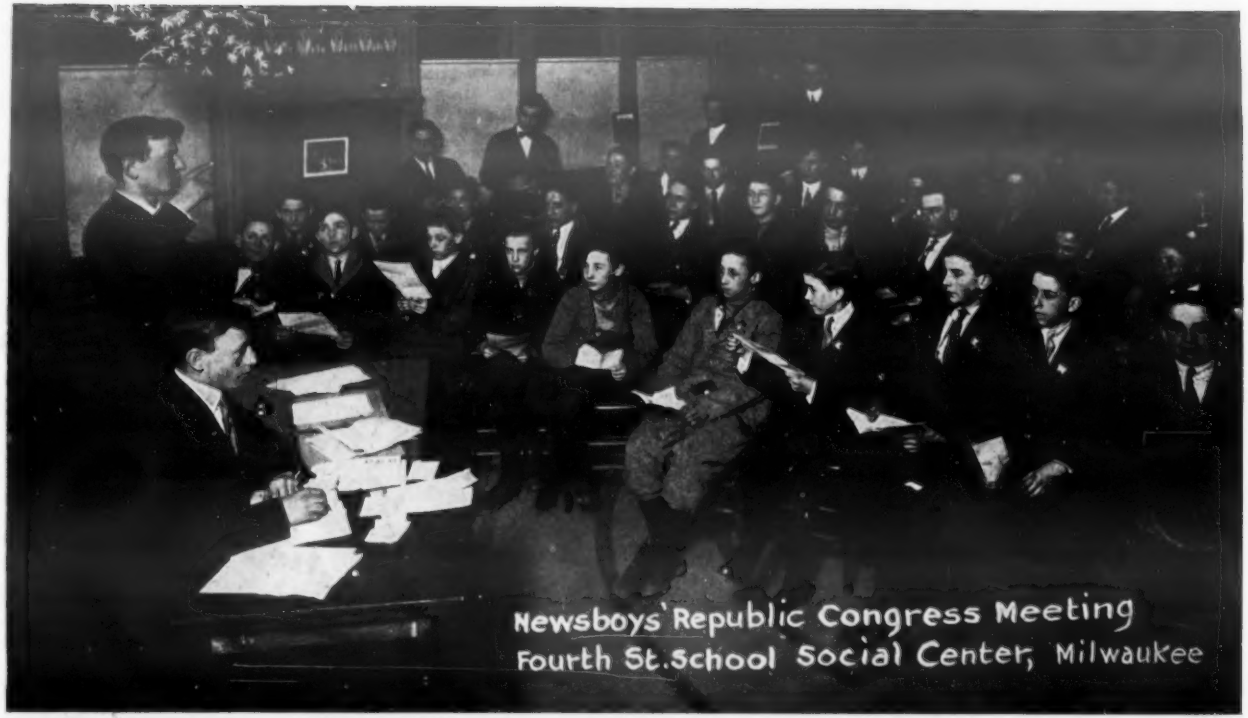


A reading-room in a schoolhouse neighborhood center is a constant temptation between games and club meetings. The boy arrives early for a Boy Scout meeting and is glad to have a room where he may read books and magazines.

Neighborhood clubs of all kinds find the center a desirable place for their meetings. The more clubs meeting in the center the better.

In their various clubs the girls gain experience in self-government, in how to do team work with other girls in an organization. Mothers can feel safe when they come with their daughters to the neighborhood center. The fact that a group of their mothers is meeting in another room makes the girls feel that the center is more worth while.

Every neighborhood has many children responsible in part for the care of younger brothers and sisters. These girls all have a common bond and in their Little Mothers' Club unconsciously absorb very much knowledge that is good for their charges.

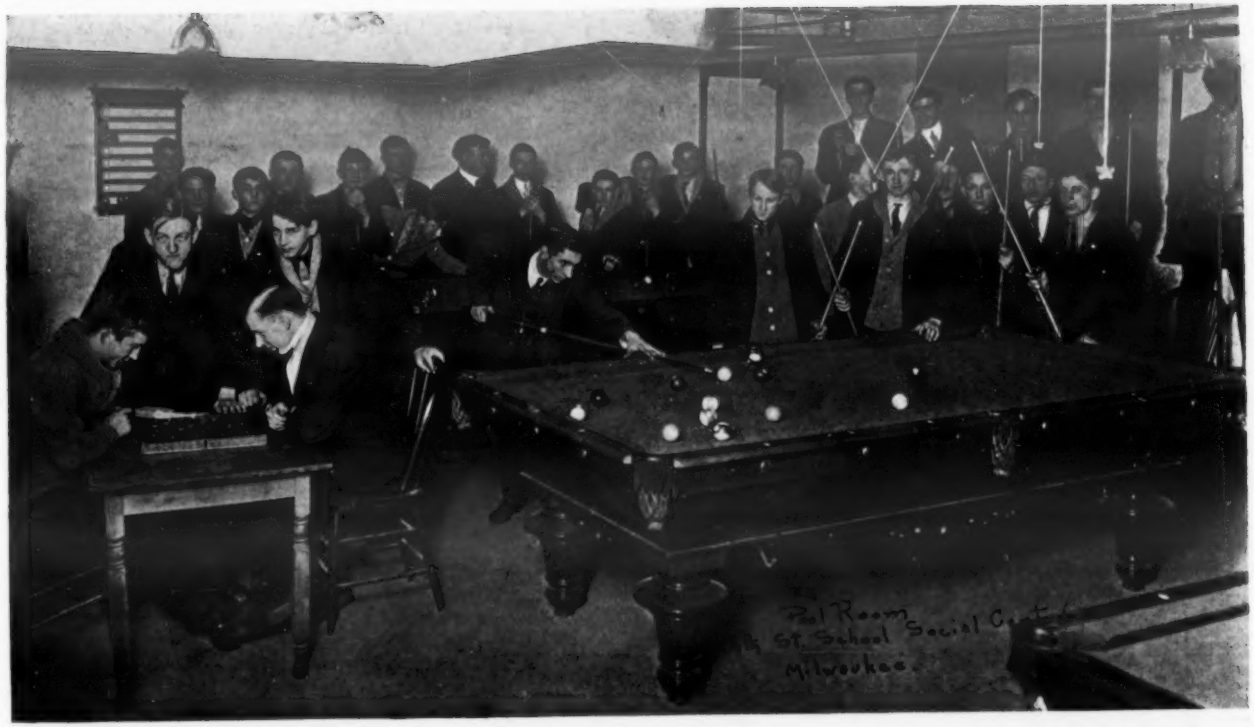


Many of the most enterprising boys in each community sell or carry newspapers. Instead of having one large club for the entire city, the newsboys of each section are able, without going long distances, to hold social gatherings in their own neighborhood center.

The neighborhood centers do much to promote patriotism. Few institutions can do more to train up citizens ready to use all their powers in the service of their country.

The neighborhood loyalty built up in civic clubs is the best preparation for the larger loyalty to the entire city.

All the pictures in this issue are photographs taken in schoolhouse neighborhood centers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. These schoolhouses were not built for recreation centers. The pictures show, however, how school buildings, though imperfect, are being used in Milwaukee.



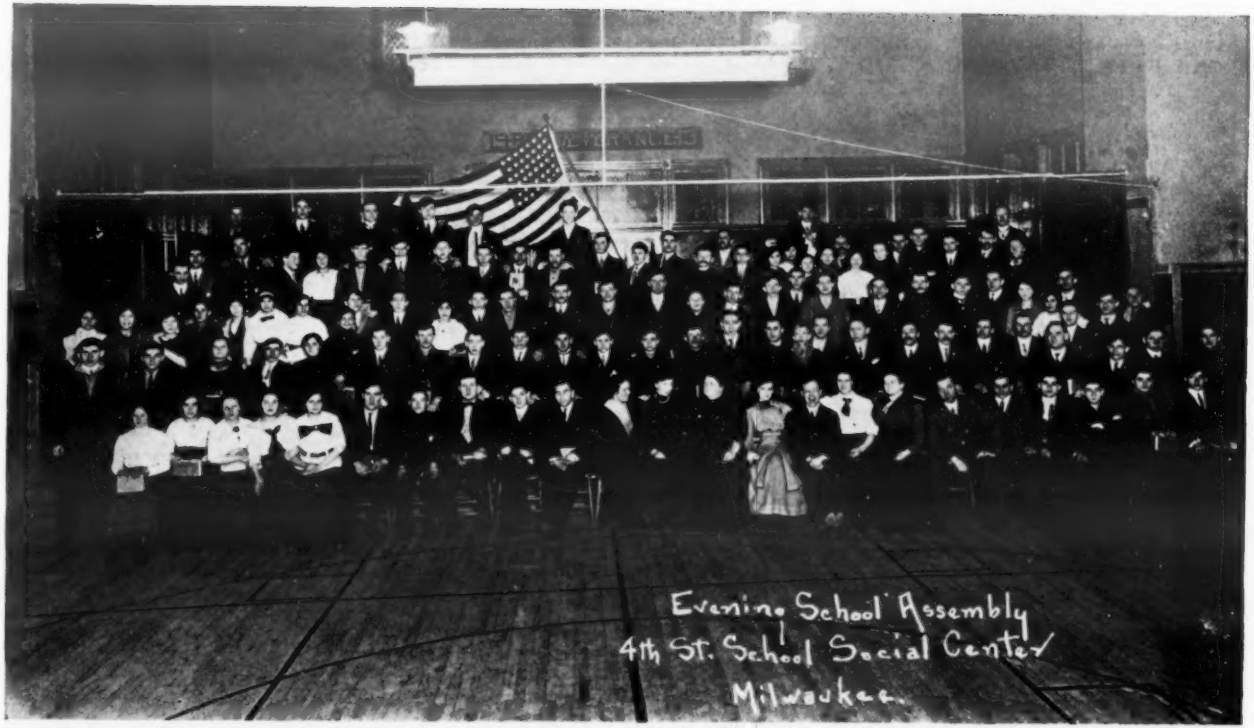
NO GAMBLING HERE

The community clubhouse has opportunity not only for every one but for nearly every mood—a quiet playroom, as well as gymnasiums, swimming-pools, clubrooms, libraries, poolrooms.

THIRTY-TWO BOYS IN THE QUIET GAMEROOM

These boys have some good, red blood—turn thirty-two Penrods loose without games and something is bound to happen!

Even the older boys like to play quiet games part of the time. Are not the young men of a community worth looking after?

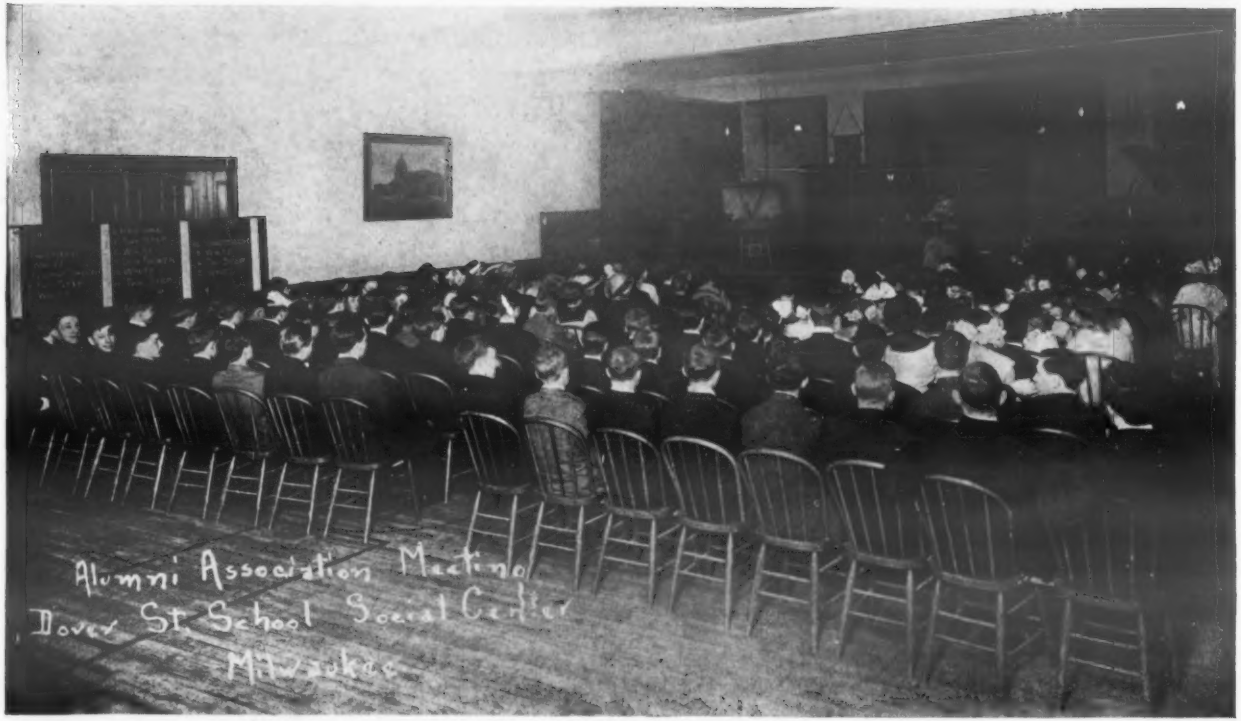


It is good for all the people of a neighborhood to come together occasionally in a general assembly.

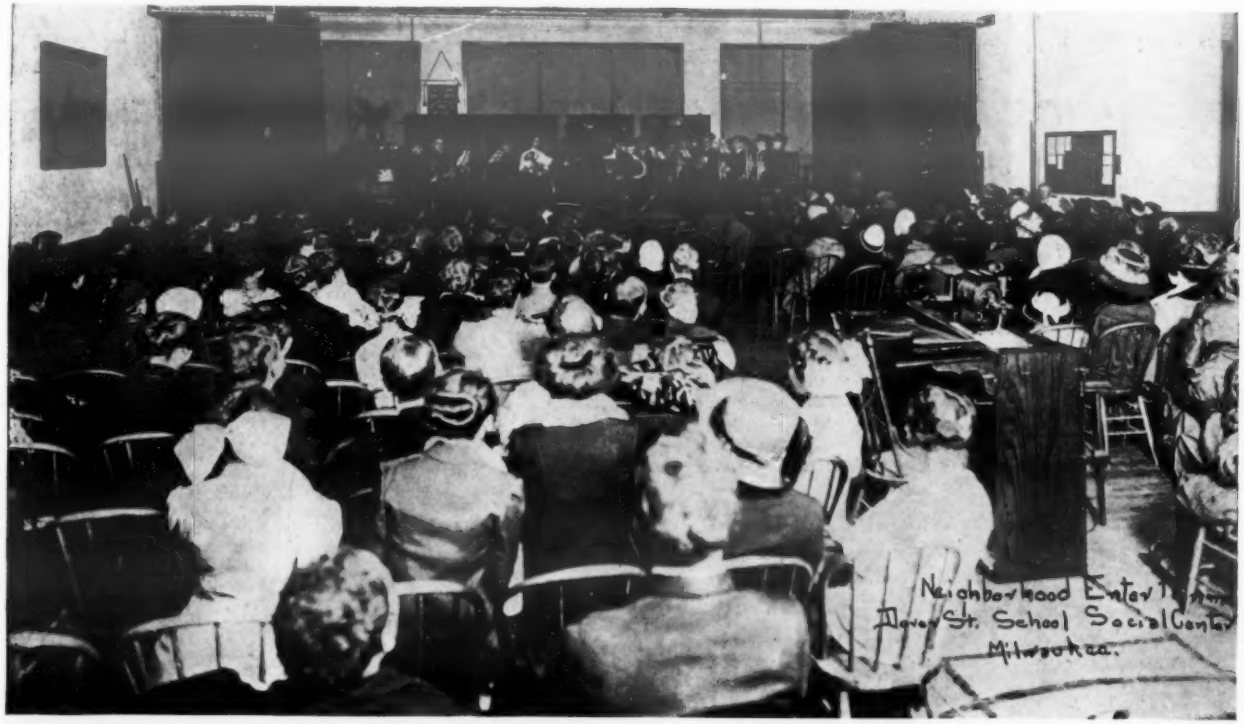
Is it not worth while to open up a schoolroom for such a gathering as this? Can any university or school show work of more vital importance to the future of America than what is going on in the neighborhood center? And all this has just begun. What might be done if adequate funds were made available for this great national movement to give a larger life to all!

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER AS A VOTING-PLACE

It is harder to vote for graft when you vote in the center where your civic club meets—where you play in the neighborhood band.



The break in a lad's life which comes when he leaves the elementary school may be made less through frequent meetings of alumni associations which keep the grip of the old on the boy until he finds himself in the new.



To sit with your neighbors in your own neighborhood center, listen to the songs of the children from your own household and from the district, to join heartily in the national songs, to laugh with your neighbors, to feel at one with the community in which you live, is to go out a better worker, a better father, a better citizen, a better man.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

To sit on the platform and look into faces like these is to gain a new faith in democracy. Men who have sat in a neighborhood center and shared in a neighborhood life find it more difficult to become a mob.

To help secure such neighborhood play centers the Playground and Recreation Association of America needs $100,000 this year.

Better to be neighbors in a bankrupt city than with chilled heart to dwell in a wealthy city too poor for neighborliness.

"You do just as much work in the world being happy as you do being miserable, only you do it quicker." It pays to be a neighbor, it pays for a city to have neighborhoods, it pays for a city to appropriate money for neighborhood play centers, it pays for men and women of public spirit to invest money in the national neighborhood play center movement.

H. S. BRAUCHER
Playground and Recreation Association of America
1 Madison Avenue, New York City

Dear Mr. Braucher:

It gives me great pleasure to write you concerning Mr. Rowland Haynes' work in Milwaukee. Mr. Haynes came to Milwaukee primarily to make a survey for the Child Welfare Commission. His work for the Commission was soon recognized by the Board of Education and he was engaged by them to do similar work in preparation for the probable introduction of recreational activities.

At the time politics were somewhat tense in our city.

His thorough investigation of existing conditions, facilities for recreation and definite recommendations, secured an appropriation of $25,000 by the Board of Education to begin the work. Such a high estimate was held of his work that he was invited to come again and give his assistance and his opinion of the start that had been made according to his recommendation.

Milwaukee can never repay the Playground and Recreation Association for his splendid and efficient work.

Very truly yours,

H. V. BERG

INTEMPERANCE—VICE—MONOTONY—LONELINESS
MUSIC—DANCING—LAUGHTER—NEIGHBORLINESS
WHICH?

The Playground and Recreation Association of America not only helped Milwaukee to establish its wonderful system of neighborhood centers—the Association has helped city after city throughout the country to establish neighborhood centers which are striving to give the same kind of community recreation.

The Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1 Madison Avenue, New York City, needs the financial and moral support of every public-spirited citizen in America.

WE ARE NEIGHBORS! WE ARE NEIGHBORS!
THERE IS TIME—THERE IS MONEY
FOR NEIGHBORLINESS

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The Great Discovery of the Twentieth Century

Neighborhood Recreation Centers are neighborhood clubs, community centers, rallying points for the fullest, finest social meeting, interchange of thought, discussion, music, dancing, games. Neighborhood Recreation Centers are an inspiration toward the higher, better things of life, a vital, pulsing, glowing force in the life of the people.